

Browns Bay School Principals Report 2024

I was privileged to be appointed to the position of principal of Browns Bay School, commencing in term 2 2024.

Peter Mulcahy, the previous principal, developed a strong school culture based on the vision of “Building Leaders and Learners.” The education programmes and school experiences are embedded in this vision.

The overarching school motto “Effort Brings Reward” is celebrated through whole school assemblies celebrating achievement, progress and the school values of Manaakitanga, Tu Rangatira, Takohanga and Whai Whakaaro (Respect, Personal Excellence, Taking Responsibility, Inquiring Minds). The motto, vision and values are all brought to life with daily conversations and our Awhi programme which has its roots in the positive behaviour for learning philosophy.

Student Achievement Data

As the table below shows, the school continues to have a high number of students achieving at or above the expected level for their year. The school has built a strong philosophy and approach to supporting students who have English as a second language. While English is recognised as the language of learning, being fluent in another language is celebrated. The data shows that the school builds on learning each year and the number of students achieving at or above each year increases.

The table below shows the students working at or above expected levels in each year group.

	Maths	Reading	Writing
Year 1		57%	57%
Year 2	81%	66%	66%
Year 3	89%	73%	73%
Year 4	94%	72%	68%
Year 5	91%	91%	86%
Year 6	84%	84%	87%

The high achievement in maths compared to reading and writing reflects teachers' understanding of teaching to the needs of English language learners and building on existing strengths.

Curriculum

Curriculum changes in 2024 have not yet made a significant impact at Browns Bay School. The mandated hour a day of teaching for maths and English were already embedded. The school embarked on implementation of a structured literacy programme in 2023. This is well embedded but ongoing analysis of teaching, learning and student progress has resulted in ongoing refinement of the programme. The school currently follows Liz Kane's structured literacy approach using the Little Learners Love Literacy programme and The Code.

The school is well placed to manage the transition to the new curriculum in 2025. The school has used teacher-only days to introduce new content in the maths curriculum and teachers will begin using this from the start of 2025. The school has accessed resources from the Ministry of Education to support teachers and will continue to plan to use these in line with best practice. We believe this will maintain our maths results and support teachers to continue to deliver high quality explicit teaching.

The structured literacy programme will be further developed with the introduction of resources from the Writer's Toolbox. This will provide students with a consistent approach to teaching writing, support teachers and students with content knowledge and also includes an AI component for our senior students to receive instant feedback on their writing.

The school continues to value outdoor education. Children from year 4 take part in camps, and the junior school outdoor education days prepare students with managed risk taking and taking on new challenges. Waterwise remains a valuable programme and the school continues to commit to weekly sessions in terms 1 and 4, relying heavily on volunteers who do not have children at school. Our children benefit hugely from an extended volunteer network.

Kahui Ako

Browns Bay is part of the Mid Bays Kahui Ako. In 2024 the teacher leading our ESOL programmes continued in an across schools leader position. Four teachers held within school leadership positions for literacy, maths, curriculum and student well being.

The ESOL workstream has led to trialling improved inductions programmes for students attending Browns Bay for the first time. This has supported teaching, learning and the well being of the students as they transition to school.

The student well being focus has supported embedding the Awhi programme, provided genuine leadership opportunities for students across the school and impacted significantly on processes that have strengthened positive behaviour for learning.

The maths leadership has ensured that the schools across the Kahui Ako have a scope and sequence that aligns with the needs of students across the Kahui and provides for smooth transitions across the schools. This has been aligned with the curriculum refresh.

Work in the literacy workstream has resulted in planning for a new reading assessment in 2025. This will identify students who are at risk of not making expected progress more quickly, reduce the time taken on assessments, increase teaching time and teachers ability to respond quickly to accelerate learning.

Review

ERO worked alongside the school for three days in October. The ERO report confirms that the school has a leadership team committed to school improvement. The full report can be found [here](#).

ERO will continue to work as an evaluative partner with the school and expects to report again in the normal timeframe of 3 years.

Property

During 2024 the 5 year property plan was approved and the roof replacement of a large block should be completed by early 2025. The project was complicated by the discovery of asbestos in the building and costs escalated significantly. When the project is complete the school will work with the Ministry to re-prioritise and increase funding for existing planned projects.

The pool was repaired and repainted in time for the community to share the facility for the second half of the summer.

The school has benefitted from a huge fundraising effort from the Friends of the School who raised funds for the new astroturf. The courts increase the quality of training facilities for netball and basketball, make the surface safer for students and have improved the learning environment of classes adjacent to the courts by reducing noise. They also look fantastic!

Personnel

Staff were able to share in a celebration of the achievements of Peter Mulcahy before he left at the end of term 1. Peter was generous with his time to ensure a smooth transition for my term 2 start.

In term two my focus was building relationships with the whole school community before starting planning for 2025. Changes to the curriculum, the impacts on teaching, learning, staff professional development and reporting to parents have been accelerated by the Ministry of Education and have dictated planning.

The teaching and support teams have remained stable through 2024 and into 2025. The school continues to have a strong network of teachers who enjoy being part of the wider teaching team in a part-time or fixed term capacity. These teachers have supported the school to fill positions for parental leave and roll growth. This is incredibly valuable when qualified teachers with New Zealand training or experience are difficult to find.

Community

The Friends of the School (FOTs) continue to work incredibly hard to support the school. The major fundraising Readathon raised over \$30 000. As well as being fundraising events, Jingle and sausage sizzles add to the rich school experiences and create great memories for children.

The FOT's leadership group are a small team and I would like to thank them for their hard work and commitment to the school. All of the children benefit from their hard work and energy. Thank you team.

Board of Trustees

The board successfully co-opted and welcomed a new Māori representative after the resignation of a board member due to changes in her circumstances.

The Board remains highly skilled and well placed to lead the school. This has been crucial support to me in my new position. I would like to thank the board for their support.



